

Medical Matters.

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF DISEASE.



Dr. C. B. Keetley, Senior Surgeon to the West London Hospital, spoke words of wisdom when giving the opening address of the Winter Session at that institution he urged the necessity of a working alliance between the philanthropist, the priest, and the physician. The lecturer dealt with cancer, tuberculosis, alcoholism, physical degeneracy, and complaints which arise from immorality. He took exception to the application of the term infectious to only a few diseases, and impressed upon his audience that the first essential to grasp was the all-pervading influence of the microbe, for all diseases might be regarded as microbic in origin. Thus, deaths classified as due to alcoholism, dissipation, and nearly all suicides might be traced to microbic influence, and also practically all the evils with which religious and other bodies were endeavouring to grapple were relations to each other—relations and allies; medical science could prove, in all, the work of the microbe, and persons engaged in rescue work often wasted means and energy through not welcoming scientific assistance. Then, it should be remembered that all microbes have an ancestry. Practically, all persons got their diseases directly or indirectly from one another.

The prophylaxis of all disease lay mainly in the sterilisation of food, the limitation of intercourse, general cleanliness, and special aseptic and antiseptic treatment adopted stringently and at the right time, against special risks.

Physical degeneracy, Dr. Keetley continued, was the first link in an evil chain. Physical and mental inferiority forced their victims to seek the company of the tuberculous, the dissipated, the drunken, and the diseased, and though the tubercle was a great producer of beauty, yet mental inferiority, especially in the case of the female sex, bore very hard on those so afflicted. Persons of both sexes who were sufferers in this respect were very seriously handicapped in the battle for life, for—and very justly—science regarded them as a menace to the national welfare.

INFLUENCE OF SALT SOLUTIONS ON THE BILE.

Dr. Casciani, in *Riforma Medica*, reports the results of some interesting experiments which he performed in a woman with a biliary fistula. He kept this woman on a strictly uniform diet,

and gave her a mineral water containing about seven-tenths of one per cent. of sodium chloride. He examined this woman's bile before and after the administration of this mineral water, and found that the amount of chlorine contained in the bile was slightly increased, while there was a more marked increase in the amount of biliary acids and of biliary salts eliminated. As cholesterin, the principal constituent of gallstones is kept in solution in the bile by the salts of the biliary acids, the administration of saline mineral waters is one of the best preventives against the deposit of gallstones in the biliary tract.

TABLOID FEEDING.

It is sometimes rashly assumed that the day is not far distant when the world will be fed by chemical tabloids instead of with beef and bread and the natural proteids and carbohydrates and albumens provided by a bountiful nature. But, though the triumph of the German chemists who are working at the artificial synthesis of natural products has been brilliant, it is not likely that this method of feeding will be adopted for many years to come. In the first place, the chemist's method is far more costly than the natural one, then, although a sufficient amount of nourishment can undoubtedly be taken in a concentrated form for the maintenance of health, the sensation of hunger is not relieved, and a certain amount of waste products are desirable in connection with the meals taken by persons in ordinary health. Again, those who are acquainted with the legitimate pleasures of the palate, and the reviving effects of a good dinner will scarcely be willing to replace this function by a five minutes' meal of tabloids. For all these and other reasons, though the chemical analysis of foods and their accurate synthesis may be of the greatest service to medicine and biology, the synthetical production of food is an object which in itself, is economically without value.

GOUTY OR RHEUMATIC COUGH.

Dr. Thomas J. Mays holds that in many cases of cough, especially in that form which persists in the winter, and moderates in the summer months in elderly people, there is present a gouty or rheumatic foundation. In this opinion he is supported by Dr. Greenhow, who says in his work on "Chronic Bronchitis": "I have frequently known bronchitis and gout habitually alternate; an obstinate attack of bronchitis sometimes subsiding on the occurrence of a smart fit of gout, and again, at other times, a fit of gout being relieved by the development of bronchitis."

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